

ALEPPO COLLEGE

ALEPPO, SYRIA

10-1680

ROOM 708
14 BEACON STREET
BOSTON 8, MASS.
February 10, 1958

Dear Friends of Aleppo College:

Recently a resident of Aleppo, who used to teach in the United States and whose son is a student at the College, made a remark which has encouraged us amidst the difficulties and uncertainties of these times. Asked by a member of the College family if she was tutoring her son in order to keep him up to the level of work in an American school she replied, "What would I teach him? The mathematics he's studying is way ahead of what he would be having there; so are the other subjects. Even the English is more advanced. You have a good school."

Living close to the academic situation, we of the administration feel painfully conscious of the deficiencies rather than proudly aware of the successes. As the academic dean summarized our attitude in a report of last fall, "The school, held together as it is by odd bits of string and Scotch tape, has weathered crisis after crisis by a breath-taking exhibition of chronic brinkmanship. The fact that we are still here is in itself a striking proof of the validity of the doctrine of grace." So we try to maintain in our own thinking a properly dialectical appraisal of the work of the College.

In the late summer and early fall we were fearful that the time of registration would show a serious drop in enrollment. We had nightmares of insolvency. But late September brought an Indian Summer of reprieve. Instead of dropping, enrollment rose 29 in the girls' division, 32 in the boys' divisions, bringing the total to an almost all-time high of 773.

In economic distribution there is also a definite improvement. The percentage of poor boys has increased from 7% to 28%; of average income, from under 40% to more than 50%. Unfortunately we don't have such figures for the girls' division, but I believe that, if available, they would show a similar distribution. The change in percentages was noted as an improvement because it is our desire to serve a cross section of Syrian society and not to become identified as a school for wealthy families only. It can be attributed in part to an increase in the amounts budgeted for financial aid.

Here I would like to note our appreciation to TAPLINE, which increased its contribution to the College this year by almost \$1700, most of this increase going to the girls' division. TAPLINE's total contribution of almost \$8000, added to substantial scholarship funds coming through the American Board and to individual contributions, makes possible the College's program of financial aid to students. It also helps in maintaining the budget for teachers' salaries. Substantial support has also been received from another oil company and from several foundations: Ford, Doris Duke, Payne Fund, and Cleveland H. Dodge.

Among notable events so far this year have been a program of English instruction for journalists of Aleppo; parents' nights for the two high schools -- and here we have not only mothers but fathers and often brothers and sisters; a visit by the Educational Survey Team of the Presbyterian Board --- the team was most generous in its appraisal of our work; our first and an excellent summer school, in 1957, of course, for the weaker students; and a thrilling Christmas service of music by the combined choirs of the boys' and girls' divisions.

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We are especially happy to report that in the government examinations of last June all boys received their baccalaureate and brevet certificates, all but one girl their brevet certificates. I believe that this is the best record of any school in the country.

The program of student activities has been slow getting under way this year because of many outside claims upon the time of the upper classmen. Most of the societies are now, however, well launched on their work. The new building, the Payne Activities Center, is being used increasingly for music, photographic work, and recording. We have sufficient equipment to get a small group started on the last activity.

This year we've had an especially active committee on religious life. It is planning to follow up last spring's successful conference -- more than one hundred students attended during the three weekends -- with another similar program of worship, study, and fellowship. The Student Christian Association has been meeting bi-weekly throughout this year. Last fall six graduates of the College entered the Near East School of Theology to prepare for full-time Christian service.

The library of the girls' division has been improved remarkably during the past year. With able leadership and a larger budget many fine new books have been purchased, attractive displays have appeared, circulation has risen, and the catalog has been checked and revised.

The unification of the girls' and boys' schools, which was voted by the respective boards last spring, has been increasingly actualized during the months since. In administration, finance, and faculty we have been working closely together. The marriage may even lead to love!

We appreciate the help which we received last year from many persons. We depend upon your continued support. It is more important now than ever that the College maintain a high level of academic work and continue its spiritual ministry to this area. If you have not been able to contribute to the work of the College this year, we hope that you will remember its needs at the beginning of this Lenten season. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Our warmest greetings and good wishes.

Sincerely yours,

HMM:ert


Horace M. McMullen

P.S. Givers in Congregational Churches may be interested to know that gifts to Aleppo College for Authorized Specials may receive Apportionment credit. Authorized Specials for 1958 are for scholarships, for equipment for the Student Activities Building, and for library books and furniture in the Girls' Division.

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c/o American Board

Room 708, 14 Beacon Street

Boston 8, Massachusetts

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